

Palmyra Palm Sugar

“Phetchaburi” is considered to be an old province that is more than thousands of years old. Traces of pre-historic humans dating back to 2,000-3,000 years have been discovered here. The prosperity of the Phetchaburi land in the past made the land one of the golden areas that three Kings chose to build their palaces here. One of them was “Phra Nakhon Kiri Palace (Khao Wang),” which was a palace from accrued sugar tax. At that time, the Chinese collected tax by walking around the community and deciding which things should be taxed. Then, they made a proposal to the officials for tax collection. There was even a tax on morning glory during the late Ayutthaya period, which gave the villagers troubles. When the King acknowledged this, it was terminated.

Similarly, there was a type of sugar tax called Roi Chak Song. In Roi Chak Song, almost two thousand baht was collected for the tax. The income from selling sugar in the era of King Rama III was about 1 million baht. Therefore, the selling system of sugar was very effective in the era of King Rama III. When sugar was prosperous, other things related to sugar, such as firewood, palm pan, or even the sugar that was put in the pot were prosperous as well. In the era of King Rama IV, there was an issue about accrued tax, especially the accrued sugar tax. The King ordered Somdet Phraya Si Suriyawong to build Phra Nakhon Kiri from the accrued sugar tax without using any government funds. After that, the King resided there from 1860 on, until the end of his reign in 1868. Who would think that sugar in Mueang Phetch is not only well known for its sweet smell, but it is also the origin of Phra Nakhon Kiri which was established on the mountaintop of Mueang Phetch.





When talking about sugar of Mueang Phetch, it is impossible not to talk about “Palmyra.” Palmyra is another name that Thai people used for “Palm Tree.” Apart from providing us with ripe toddy palm to make toddy palm cake, palm juice and palm sugar comes from stirring the nectar of the male inflorescence until it is thickened. Palm sugar is yellowish and nearly white. Sometimes it has a dark brown color but that is less common. Palm sugar can be used for cooking in both food and desserts. However, it is popular among Thai people to use it to make desserts due to its sweet taste, which is greatly suitable with Thai desserts. The quality of Palmyra palm sugar depends on the age of the palm tree. Mostly, the palm that is used to make the Palmyra palm sugar is more than 10 years old, which is in the stage of spiking inflorescence. The procedures are similar in both male and female. The difference is how to use the stick for kneading Chan or Nguang. In the villager’s words, it is called Mai Khap. Palmyra palm sugar has been made since the ancient times. It was made for food in the family or shared with neighbors, which is different from present times. Now, it is made for sale, forming groups of Palmyra palm sugar manufacturers that produce and distribute in the country and abroad.

The procedure for making Palmyra palm sugar is not complicated. It starts from filtering the sugar from the palm, scraping through the thin white cloth. After that, it is boiled with high fire and stirred until the sugar is boiled and becomes palm juice, which you can drink immediately, or continue stirring until it is thickened into a lump. Then, pour the stirred sugar into the mold and wait until the sugar has clotted. Remove the Palmyra palm sugar from the mold and use it to cook or eat right away. It is hard to find the real Palmyra palm sugar since most manufacturers will mix with granulated sugar, which changes its color and taste. The way to observe whether the Palmyra palm sugar is real or fake is that the color of real Palmyra palm sugar is reddish with mild and sweet taste. It has a fine texture, which will melt when touching the food. However, fake Palmyra palm sugar is white with too sweet a taste. It has a rough and hard texture and can be kept longer.



When talking about a famous dessert from Palmyra palm sugar, it will definitely be “Khanom Mueang Phetch.” This word is used for famous and unique desserts of Phetchaburi Province that are made from Palmyra palm. There are several important Khanom Mueang Phetch of Phetchaburi, such as “Palm Pulp in Syrup,” using palm pulp in the third stage, where the texture is crumble like coconut pulp but thicker, and sweetening it; “Fried Palmyra,” coating the palm pulp in syrup and frying it; “Toddy Palm Cake,” is made from old and ripe palm. The palm is mashed and mixed with flour, Palmyra palm sugar, and coconut milk. Then it is stirred and steamed until cooked with grated coconut and sesame sprinkled on top; and “Sticky Sweet” which comes from stirring palm juice until it dries out to make palm sugar. The sticky sugar on the edge of the pan is called Sticky Sweet.

Popular Khanom Mueang Phetch since the reign of Rama IV until now a “Khanom Khi Nu,” which became famous before other desserts. It is soft and less sweet with the smell of jasmine. Sprinkle grated coconut before eating; “Sesame Crisp Rice” is a dessert that is made in the form of sheets and is dried out in the sun. You can eat it right away or bake it first; and “Baked Thai Custard” which has a sweet and greasy taste. It is different from other cities because it has a fine texture but is not too hard. It is not clotted into a lump and it doesn’t have holes or sprinkles of fried shallots on top.

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